

OSCA Newsletter

1ST MARCH 2024

WELCOME

Welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter - we hope you like the new look! Since coming back after half-term, students have been settling back in to learning. Our Year 11's are now in the middle of their mock exams and we are so proud of them for their hard work this week. Thank you to parents, carers and staff or supporting this.

GOOD NEWS

Last week, a group of students were chosen to take part in a research project for Middlesex University. This was a student-led session, and those involved were able to voice their opinions surrounding their citizenship (character development) lessons. Students were given tasks to help form their ideas, for example, ordering the importance of certain topics. The session was filmed, and will be sent over to the researchers at Middlesex University to observe. It was an insightful session, and their opinions and suggestions will be used to help shape the citizenship curriculum all over the country. Thank you to all of the students who took part!

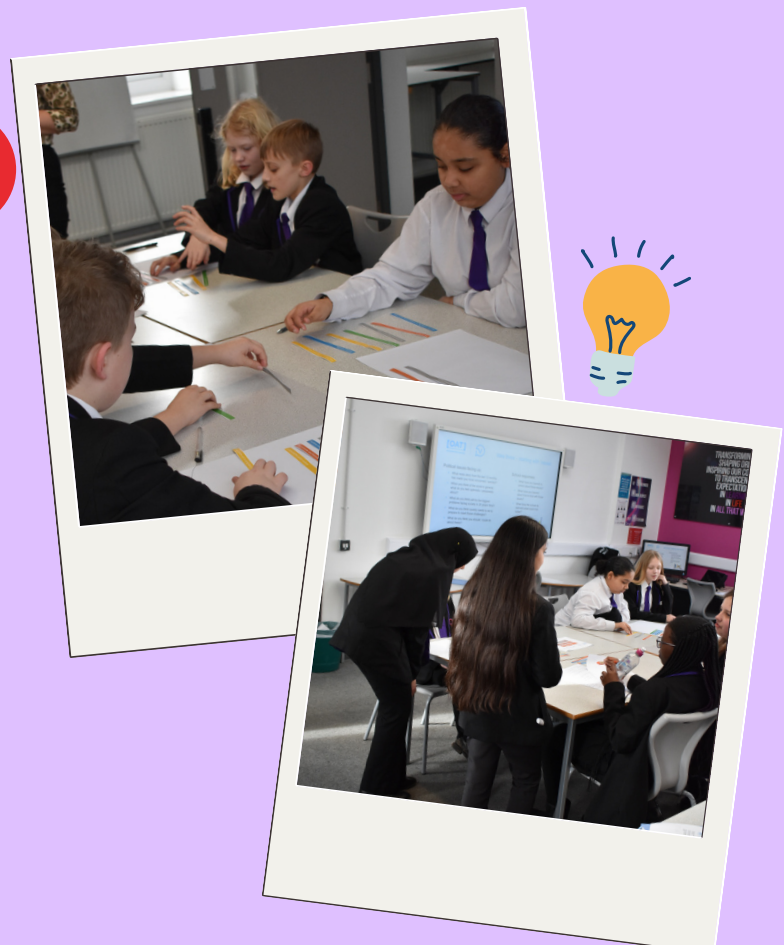
NOTICES

World Book Day : 7th March - This year, we will be celebrating World Book Day by inviting staff and students to dress as a character from a book!

For students, this will be a non-uniform day with a suggested donation of £1 please.

All proceeds will be split between our Library and our Fundraising Project to 'Get OSCA a New Pitch'.

Students are permitted to wear non-uniform, but dressing up is encouraged, and prizes will be given for the best costume!!



SOCIAL MEDIA

Don't forget to follow us on social media, where you can find any news on school activities as well as updates about recent events.



Ormiston Sandwell
Community Academy



@OSCATweets

ATTENDANCE

High attendance is vital to ensure that students reach their maximum potential while at school. Having a couple of days off here and there may not seem like it will have much of an impact, but by having just 6-10 days off a year, it can drop the chances of achieving those higher grades by 10%. This equates to over 50 hours of learning lost per year.

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about SMART TVs

Smart TVs connect to the internet without the need for a set-top box or streaming device, letting users access a range of features through the TV set itself: from on-demand content apps like BBC iPlayer to streaming services such as Netflix, as well connecting to smartphones and other wireless devices. Most new televisions are internet enabled – so whether you're thinking of upgrading your home viewing system or buying an additional TV for your child's room, it's now even more important to consider the online safety aspects.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

AGE-INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

From Netflix to Disney+ to Prime Video, there is a plethora of streaming services available. While these services offer content catering for younger viewers, they also provide material for more mature audiences. If you don't have parental controls set up on your accounts, your child could find themselves being exposed to shows and movies with adult themes, strong language and violence.

INCREASED SCREEN TIME

The array of content available through smart TVs could lead to your child spending excessive amounts of time in front of the screen. Not only can prolonged screen time distract from important activities such as schoolwork or exercise, but experts have also warned that endless hours in front of the box can lead to health problems including obesity, poor sleeping patterns and depression.

REMOTE-CONTROL RETAIL

Like many online devices, smart TVs facilitate digital purchases: buying a new app or the latest season of a favourite show, for example. If your child has access to a bank card and isn't restricted by spending controls on the system, they could run up a sizeable bill through a smart TV fairly quickly – especially if they're not quite old enough to fully appreciate the value of money.

UNCONVINCING SECURITY

As Internet of Things (IoT) devices, smart TVs can be uniquely vulnerable to attack. Experts warn that internet-enabled TVs tend not to support high-level security software, so you won't always be able to download strong antivirus programmes like you would on a phone or computer. Being targeted by hackers could be deeply upsetting for your child, as well as putting their personal data at risk.

A SILENT SPY?

Some smart TVs already collect data on users' viewing habits and then display targeted advertising based on that personal information – while there have also been reports of internet-enabled TVs (and the apps installed on them) being used to 'eavesdrop' on owners. In models with a built-in microphone (for voice activation), third parties could potentially listen in on someone's home life.

CONTACT FROM STRANGERS

Many smart TVs can be used for web browsing, social media and live streaming – all of which could allow unknown users to contact your child (or vice versa). If your child engages with these functions of the TV, a stranger could potentially discover their contact information and potentially then use it to obtain even more sensitive personal details, such as your home address.

Advice for Parents & Carers

MAKE IT A FAMILY THING

Family TV time is a great way to model the responsible enjoyment of technology – showing your child how to use the smart TV safely for when they're old enough to watch it independently. You could also take this opportunity to establish some healthy TV boundaries, such as time limits on their daily viewing or how to make sure they're only watching content that's appropriate for their age.

SET UP PARENTAL CONTROLS

It's likely that your smart TV has built-in parental controls, which not only let you filter out age-inappropriate shows, movies and games but can also restrict in-app purchasing, so your child can't accidentally spend money through the device. When you've enabled these safeguards, have an open conversation with your child about the reasons, helping them to understand the potential risks.

CREATE CHILD PROFILES

Much like with smartphones and tablets, apps can be downloaded onto smart TVs: from free content platforms such as BBC iPlayer to paid-for services like Prime Video. Most of these apps allow you to create a separate account for your child which has different settings to your own – suggesting more child-friendly material and reducing the possibility of them viewing explicit content.

CONSIDER THE LOCATION

If you're concerned about the online safety hazards that a smart TV might pose to your child, you could consider where in your home you put the device. The safest option would be to place the smart TV in a shared family space – so that an adult is usually nearby and able to supervise while your child's watching it – rather than in the relative privacy of a bedroom.

Meet Our Expert

Carly Page is an experienced technology journalist with a track record of more than 10 years in the industry. Previously the editor of tech tabloid *The Inquirer*, Carly is now a freelance technology journalist, editor and consultant.



NOS
National
Online
Safety®
#WakeUpWednesday